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Report of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues on its 2011 annual meeting

Summary

The 2011 meeting of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues was convened in New York from 21 to 23 November 2011. It was hosted by the United Nations Population Fund in accordance with the Support Group's terms of reference and the practice established in 2002 of rotating the Chair annually among its members. The theme of the meeting was "Population, development and indigenous peoples' issues".

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I. Introduction

1. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) hosted the annual meeting of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues at its headquarters in New York from 21 to 23 November 2011. Twenty-five delegates from 15 United Nations agencies, including the secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, attended the meeting and 2 members of the Permanent Forum.

2. The main purpose of the meeting was threefold: to enhance coordination among Support Group members, including the Permanent Forum and its secretariat; to generate a space for reporting on specific recommendations of the Permanent Forum to United Nations agencies; and to share knowledge on the work on population-related matters being carried out by different United Nations agencies at the global, regional and national levels.

3. The Inter-Agency Support Group Meeting was opened by the Chair of the Permanent Forum, Myrna Cunningham Kain, who pointed out there had been universal consensus established around the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.[1] She also congratulated the Governments of Canada and the United States of America for lending their support.

4. The Chair mentioned the importance of the Support Group in strengthening the United Nations response to indigenous peoples' issues at the global, national and local levels and pointed out that there was a need to build on common efforts to advance the rights of indigenous peoples. She commended the work conducted jointly by the Support Group and the Permanent Forum secretariat in reaching out to United Nations country teams and raising awareness on the Declaration and the United Nations Development Group Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues. She highlighted the contributions of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to the training of United Nations country teams, Government officials and indigenous peoples, and the need for continued support from all United Nations agencies.

5. The Chair thanked the World Health Organization (WHO) for submitting the report on the 2010 annual meeting of the Support Group (E/C.19/2011/10), which focused on indigenous peoples' health, stressing the need for enhanced attention to indigenous peoples' health and its social determinants. Further, she recognized those United Nations agencies that have adopted policies or strategies for engaging with indigenous peoples and their consultative processes, stressing the added value of specific policy documents. She also recognized the value of the newly established United Nations Indigenous Peoples' Partnership (UNIPP) as an innovative mechanism for joint action, as well as the joint work being carried out in Latin America and the Caribbean by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), UNFPA, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Fondo Indigena and the Ibero-American General Secretariat/Spanish Agency for International Cooperation in addressing the need for obtaining relevant data through population and housing censuses.

6. The Chair recognized the creation of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum at IFAD, where a global meeting is expected to be convened in February 2013 in conjunction with the Fund's Governing Council. She also acknowledged the forthcoming session

[1] General Assembly resolution 61/295, annex.

of the Permanent Forum and its interactive dialogue with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) as well as the adoption of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity,[2] and the Tkarihwaie:ri Code of Ethical Conduct to Ensure Respect for the Cultural and Intellectual Heritage of Indigenous and Local Communities Relevant to the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity,[3] under the auspices of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.[4] The Chair also provided some valuable advice to the Support Group in her statement (summarized in sect. IV below).

II. Substantive sessions of the meeting

7. The main substantive sessions of the Support Group annual meeting dealt with the topic of population, development and indigenous peoples' issues, including sub-topics such as: population dynamics; urbanization and housing; data gathering and indicators; indigenous peoples and the environment; and sexual and reproductive health of indigenous peoples/women. Other substantive topics discussed during this segment included: legal reforms in the light of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; indigenous peoples and the Millennium Development Goals; indigenous peoples and material poverty; and indigenous women and children.

8. The opening substantive session on population dynamics, housing and indigenous peoples reviewed the lack of statistical data on indigenous peoples worldwide which made it particularly difficult to identify population trends in order to do justice to the variety of situations of indigenous peoples throughout the world. Where data are available, they indicate that indigenous peoples' life expectancy is below that of non-indigenous populations; and that indigenous mortality reflects persistently higher death rates at all ages and higher birth rates than among average populations. Higher maternal mortality rates among indigenous women are a fairly consistent finding, and although data on reproductive health and voluntary family planning are far from complete, there is evidence of lower rates of voluntary contraceptive usage among indigenous women. Also, there is a serious lack of reliable data on sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS. Nonetheless, it is believed that indigenous women are particularly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and that economic, social and sexual exploitation contributes to this trend. It was also highlighted that there is a trend of growing migration of indigenous peoples to urban areas, which is related to factors such as improved social services, enhanced economic opportunities, loss of traditional lands, environmental degradation, and conflicts of different types.

9. From a regional perspective, in the case of Latin America, there is an indication that from a demographic point of view, indigenous peoples are a young population owing to high fertility and mortality rates. This situation poses special challenges to Governments in terms of approaching the differentiated needs of their citizens, principally in the realm of education and health. Higher fertility rates are

[2] UNEP/CBD/COP/10/27, annex, decision X/1, annex I.
[3] UNEP/CBD/COP/10/27, annex, decision X/42, annex.
[4] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

often linked to lack of access to sexual and reproductive health services and also to different reproductive ideals or intentions. Other important demographic traits of indigenous peoples in the Americas are their early age of reproduction and marriage, though diversity among indigenous peoples does exist. High mortality rates also reflect discrimination and inequalities in the access to nutrition and health, especially for newborns and children under 5 years of age. The continued rural profile of indigenous peoples is in great measure related to their collective territorial rights. Nevertheless, poverty, demographic pressures, land deterioration and invasions are promoting migration to urban centres or to other rural areas. This growing urbanization can have a profound impact on indigenous peoples' sociocultural values and norms.

10. The recommendations from various members of the Support Group in response to the presentations on population dynamics and trends encompassed, inter alia, the need to continue gathering pertinent and quality data through censuses and surveys, and through improved administrative registries in health, employment and education, while taking into consideration indigenous peoples' perspectives. It was also recommended that national and regional population data on indigenous peoples should be collected, especially in countries and regions where data are scarce and indigenous peoples may not be formally recognized by Governments; and that Governments should be strongly motivated to formally recognize indigenous peoples and protect their human rights.

11. The topic of urbanization, sustainable urban development and the right to adequate housing was addressed, particularly in the context of considering key trends and challenges of urbanization as they relate to indigenous peoples. It was recognized that urbanization of indigenous peoples is the result of two main influences: migration of indigenous peoples to towns and cities; and the engulfment of indigenous communities through the growth of cities, making their ancestral lands part of urban settings. The lack of recognition of the right to self-determination, large-scale dispossession, and degradation of indigenous peoples' lands, territories and resources, together with material poverty and destitution, have had a significant impact on indigenous peoples' access to housing.

12. Housing and development policies and programmes discriminate against indigenous peoples directly or have discriminatory effects. Barriers to adequate housing include: unemployment, material poverty, discrimination, and lack of adequate housing programmes for indigenous peoples and other socially excluded populations. Specific challenges faced by indigenous peoples in cities include: difficulty in achieving integration into an urban way of life; lack of security of tenure; and the constant threat of forced eviction from homes and/or lands. Homeownership and rentals are also prohibitively expensive; there is lack of nearby social services, such as schools, clinics and hospitals in the urban areas where indigenous peoples dwell; and there is a perception of indigenous peoples as an economic and political liability by many local government authorities.

13. In order to address the housing challenges, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) published the first in a series of five policy guides in 2009, entitled: *Housing Indigenous Peoples in Cities: Urban Policy Guide to Housing for Indigenous Peoples in Cities*.[5] These policy guides aim to assist

[5] Nairobi, UN-Habitat, September 2009.

States and stakeholders in achieving the ultimate goal of providing affordable and adequate shelter for indigenous peoples. The participants at the Support Group meeting affirmed the need to promote and provide legal security of tenure for indigenous peoples so as to protect them from forced evictions, as well as access to available, affordable and habitable housing and services which are in accessible locations and adequate for protecting and promoting indigenous peoples' cultures.

14. The participants at the Support Group meeting recommended that the UN-Habitat Policy Guides to Housing for Indigenous Peoples in Cities (series title) be disseminated and discussed with local governments and indigenous peoples' organizations so as to guarantee their right to dignified living conditions in urban areas.

15. Various participants at the Support Group meeting addressed the sub-topic of data collection for evidence-based policies and programmes which included showcasing the work carried out within the framework of the 2010 round of population and housing censuses in the Latin American region by Fondo Indigena, ECLAC, UNFPA, UNICEF, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation. This work aims to ensure the visibility of indigenous peoples in national statistics. The need for countries to create commissions for institutionalizing indigenous peoples' issues in national statistical institutes and their data-collection processes was highlighted. Further, there must be permanent agreements between indigenous peoples and those commissions. The primary functions of the commissions would be to design and implement training workshops on census processes aimed at indigenous peoples' organizations and statisticians. This could also include discussions of indigenous peoples' world views and the main human rights instruments to facilitate the formation of working groups for further discussion and decision-making regarding the application of international standards on census concepts, operations, logistics and organizational issues. This would be required in order to identify: good practices to be used in other census operations; areas in which international recommendations have been implemented with clear-cut results; and obstacles to their application as well as the means to overcome those obstacles.

16. Regarding the construction of indicators, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, on behalf of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the secretariat of the Permanent Forum, informed the meeting of the need to keep track of the advancement of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples through the construction of an integrated assessment framework, which would assist actors at local, national and international levels. These agencies are constructing a conceptual and methodological framework on indicators designed to capture implementation through structural, process and outcome indicators. There is a need to take this work forward during 2012, despite financial constraints. It was also mentioned that the Office of the High Commissioner is preparing a publication on indicators for indigenous peoples which will soon be launched. Further, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity is operationalizing indicators that are relevant and adapted to land tenure, traditional languages and traditional occupations.

17. Various participants at the Support Group meeting indicated the need to carry out informed dialogues on data collection and indicators for indigenous peoples through which to work on achieving common goals that would lead to the

harmonization of concepts and criteria for the better achievement of intercultural objectives; to search for additional resources to complement the resources available in the national statistical institutes and to position data and information gathering in order to make it available for development agendas. Further, various participants at the Support Group meeting recommended that States demonstrate how they are applying national and regional strategies for incorporating and making indigenous peoples visible in their data-gathering processes and monitoring systems. This will enhance the definition and construction of indicators, including the recognition of indigenous peoples' collective rights. Progress should be demonstrated in institutionalizing the integration of indigenous peoples in national statistical processes.

18. Countries that have adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples must adjust their legal frameworks and policies. This was highlighted by the experience of the Congo, which was seen as demonstrating a good practice which could be emulated by other countries. That country's Law No. 5-2011 to promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples was designed in response to requests from indigenous peoples to access their land and resources, obtain respect for their cultural heritage and enjoy equal citizenship and participation. The main triggers were: the United Nations country team's advocacy, the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Government commitment to human rights issues and social mobilization. Law No. 5-2011 ensures equal rights in all aspects of life for indigenous peoples and calls for consultation with indigenous peoples on all legislative and administrative issues affecting them. It has also decreed the establishment of an intersectoral ministerial committee to monitor the implementation of the Law. The main challenges that lie ahead regarding the application of Law No. 5-2011 are: the absence of a specific enforcement mechanism, budgetary constraints, a weak judicial system and the need for a shift in thinking in the country.

19. The participants at the Support Group meeting recommended that the United Nations agencies continue to provide support for the implementation of Law No. 5-2011 in the Congo and closely monitor its application, identifying technical, programmatic and operational needs and disseminating the experience among other countries.

20. On the topic of indigenous peoples and the environment, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity presented information on the Nagoya Protocol and recommended that the Permanent Forum seek the views of indigenous peoples from all regions regarding the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Nagoya Protocol processes, particularly when formulating recommendations. Related to this issue was the propensity of a minority of indigenous participants in the Convention on Biological Diversity processes to seek redress at the Permanent Forum when their views were not supported by the indigenous caucus (International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity). Such practices should be actively discouraged by the Permanent Forum. Also highlighted was the need for recommendations to be within the mandate of the intended United Nations agency in order to ensure that they would be actionable.

21. On the topic of indigenous peoples and the environment, the role of indigenous peoples in obtaining solutions in the context of sustainable development, including their involvement in the Rio+20 process, was discussed. The Equator Initiative and

the Ecosystem Pavillion highlighted their role in sharing information, building capacities and raising the profile of local and indigenous peoples through the exchanging of their experiences. There is a need for scaling up and scaling out local best practices on biodiversity conservation, climate change and sustainable land management and to link local experiences and knowledge with national and international policymaking.

22. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has been involving indigenous peoples in the consultation processes for Rio+20, including the twelfth session of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum in February 2011 and the regional consultation meetings in October 2011. During these consultations and outreach activities, recurring themes surfaced in terms of expectations for Rio+20, including social equity and justice; a strengthening of principle 10 of the Declaration on Environment and Development;[6] human rights-based accountability; sustainable development goals; and innovative sources of finance.

23. Recommendations made by various participants at the Support Group meeting on the topic of indigenous peoples and the environment included the need to consider gender equality and the rights of marginalized groups, such as women, youth and indigenous peoples, in the Rio+20 process, and to honour the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in national policies and laws, as well as the need for stricter regulation of foreign investments related to natural resources and the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples. Further, there is an urgent need for conservation and sustainable use of natural resources as well as the implementation of principle 10 among marginalized groups in countries within the Asia and Pacific region because they are denied access to environmental information. There is also a need to continue identifying indigenous communities' sustainable development solutions and linking them with national and international policies.

24. A panel on the Millennium Development Goals and poverty reduction as they relate to indigenous peoples comprised the secretariat of the Permanent Forum, IFAD, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and PAHO. Panel members pointed out that there is a need to frame the Millennium Development Goals from a human rights-based perspective when referring to the development of indigenous peoples, as the importance of lands and resources, culture and identity and self-determination for development are frequently ignored. It was stressed that indigenous peoples are invisible in the Goals and that reviews of the Goals in some countries indicate that indigenous peoples are not even mentioned or referred to in country reports. It is therefore essential to reverse the current situation and include indigenous peoples in the Goals process, as well as adopt a more comprehensive approach on the topic of development.

25. Recommendations made by various participants in the Support Group meeting included the need to revise the Millennium Development Goal indicators so that they reflected the realities of indigenous peoples. Non-income specific indicators related to poverty and indigenous peoples should be considered when addressing the Millennium Development Goals, such as the lack of indigenous peoples' voices in political and bureaucratic systems and processes; the non-recognition of the

[6] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex I.

collective rights of indigenous peoples; and the lack of access to basic infrastructure and social services. Poverty, especially for indigenous peoples, should be examined not only from an individual perspective but by using a human rights lens, recognizing both collective and individual human rights. The aim is to render the Millennium Development Goals more relevant to indigenous peoples so that the Goals process may contribute to indigenous peoples' well-being.

26. With regard to poverty and indigenous peoples, there is a need for change at the level of policy and programme design. IFAD highlighted the interlocking disadvantages that perpetuate rural poverty, stressing that indigenous peoples are disproportionately more affected. Thus, there is a need to strengthen indigenous peoples' assets and capabilities at the individual, organizational and collective levels. Also, there is a need for increased political representation of indigenous peoples and their involvement in decision-making processes. The importance of communications and advocacy for eradicating rural poverty was also recognized.

27. The IFAD self-driven development paradigm for working with indigenous peoples, based on collective rights, includes securing rights to indigenous lands and resources; respecting traditional knowledge; ensuring full participation in development initiatives; promoting diversity and distinctiveness; and respecting all aspects of indigenous peoples' cultures. IFAD presented its institutional mechanisms for promoting the effectiveness of this paradigm, including its Policy on Engagement with Indigenous Peoples; the Country Strategic Opportunities Programmes; projects financed through loans and grants; the Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility; and the Forum for Indigenous Peoples Issues. For the sake of consistency, IFAD has also updated its operational guidelines and quality assurance mechanism in project design; and country technical notes to assist project design teams are being drafted with the support of indigenous peoples' organizations and the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs.

28. UNDP presented its work on addressing the rights of indigenous peoples through its support to countries in their efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, by demonstrating its utilization of the United Nations Development Group-endorsed Millennium Development Goals Acceleration Framework (MAF) tool for mainstreaming human rights and helping national partners identify bottlenecks in existing policies and programmes, within the realm of policy, financing, and service delivery and utilization.[7] Using the United Nations Common Understanding on a Human Rights-based Approach to Development Cooperation, the Framework addresses disparities and inequalities as one of the major causes of uneven progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals across and within countries, by responding to the needs of the most vulnerable — the poorest of the poor, including women and ethnic minorities. The Framework also addresses issues of availability and accessibility of services, cultural pertinence and acceptability, and issues related to accountability, participation and non-discrimination.

29. PAHO introduced its 2012-2013 workplan for integrating cultural diversity in health as a means of addressing the health-related Millennium Development Goals. The workplan focuses on health equity and seeks to integrate and monitor an intercultural perspective in health; facilitate technical collaboration with ministries

[7] More information on the Millennium Development Goals Acceleration Framework is available from http://content.undp.org/go/newsroom/2010/september/undp-puts-forward-new-approach-to-speed-up-progress-on-anti-poverty-goals.en.

of health; improve health evidence; provide disaggregated data for advocacy and decision-making; and provide access to and exchange of knowledge. In the Americas, PAHO has contributed to building capacities for integrating an ethnic variable in health, as evidenced through its preparation with ECLAC of ethnic-related atlases in 12 countries and through pilots designed to incorporate the ethnic variable in health systems, as demonstrated by Chile in the case of the local health systems of indigenous peoples. Further, the PAHO virtual library on indigenous health for Andean countries is proving a valuable means for increasing access to knowledge on culturally pertinent health programmes for indigenous peoples.

30. **There were some important outcomes arising from the discussions on the subsection topic of the Millennium Development Goals and poverty reduction and indigenous peoples.** Various participants in the meeting stated that there is a need for United Nations agencies and the Support Group to continue advocating for a revised and holistic concept of development for indigenous peoples based on the recognition of their individual and collective rights as well as their concepts of development and well-being. There is also a need for pertinent indicators through which to assess the progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals among indigenous peoples as well as for promoting policies, procedures and guidelines in United Nations agencies designed to address the specific development needs of indigenous peoples. Staff should be aware of these policies. It is important to adopt road maps for policy implementation and monitoring with the close cooperation of indigenous peoples and to ensure in-house advocacy and policy dialogue as well as communications and advocacy at country level.

31. With regard to the issue of indigenous peoples' right to health, reproductive health services for indigenous women and their contribution to reducing maternal mortality and morbidities and the unmet need for voluntary family planning were highlighted. PAHO, UNFPA and Family Care International shared valuable experiences and knowledge based on their work in Africa, Asia and Latin America, highlighting the importance of culturally acceptable health approaches to addressing indigenous women's health rights and vulnerabilities. It was recognized that, despite the fact that many States in the Latin American region formally recognize indigenous peoples' right to health and to cultural diversity, gaps persist in respect of the enjoyment of those rights, with adverse effects on the health and well-being of indigenous women and adolescent girls.

32. PAHO, UNFPA and Family Care International agreed on the important role that capacity development and the empowerment of indigenous women's organizations and networks play in advancing the reproductive health agenda, both within indigenous communities and with regard to the State. The role of intercultural dialogues and evidence-based advocacy in creating awareness, and of increased commitment by the State and indigenous leaders, was highlighted. The role of indigenous women's organizations in the monitoring of health programmes, as in Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Ecuador, was also emphasized.

33. The example of the Congo demonstrates that access to information on indigenous women's reproductive health requires that the State promote a multidisciplinary approach embedded in legal and normative frameworks. As the experiences of the Central African Republic, the Philippines, Viet Nam and countries in Latin America demonstrate, community-based interventions are fundamental for mobilizing communities to save indigenous women's lives. The role

of indigenous authorities and leaders, including traditional doctors, and local health authorities are fundamental for consolidating effective health programmes and quality services which need to go beyond isolated innovative pilot experiences.

34. Various participants in the Support Group meeting made recommendations directed at States, indigenous peoples, health authorities and United Nations agencies. They included the need to closely monitor the violation of the health rights of indigenous peoples through human rights mechanisms or bodies; to expand the knowledge of professionals and communities on human rights; to engage indigenous peoples' participation and consent in the design and implementation of health programmes; to ensure the inclusion of indigenous perspectives in health policies; and to generate data and knowledge on indigenous peoples health issues as well as to build capacities of national and local health authorities in evidence-based decision-making and monitoring. It was agreed that operationalized policies and norms, culturally acceptable guides, tools and methodologies are essential. Also, United Nations agencies need to improve coordination.

35. UNFPA also made recommendations focusing on the service and community levels, including the need for increased male involvement in reproductive health programmes; the need to promote maternity waiting homes and community emergency funds to address transportation and cost barriers. Also, there is a need to promote community peer education programmes and build the capacities of health advocates at the community level, as well as to use local languages and symbols in health services.

36. The participants at the meeting also addressed the issue of gender equality as a key dimension for advancing the human rights and development of indigenous women and children. Within this framework, Fondo Indigena highlighted the importance of building leadership skills for indigenous women, training them as political activists and providing them with knowledge on women's rights so that they can effectively undertake their organizational and advocacy work. The course conferring a "Diplomado sobre mujeres indigenas" within Fondo Indigena offers a means of fostering the collecting and sharing of indigenous knowledge among indigenous women and revaluing the importance of cultural and spiritual conservation.

37. A situational assessment of indigenous children was made by UNICEF emphasizing the significantly higher birth rates of indigenous peoples and low birth registration in some countries; higher infant and child mortality rates; and low school enrolments and gender imbalances which lead to educational exclusion and higher illiteracy rates. The assessment also indicated the degree to which indigenous children are vulnerable to armed conflict; child labour and trafficking; high suicide rates; alcohol and substance abuse; violence, abuse and exploitation; and lack of access to justice.

38. UNICEF addresses issues involving vulnerable and excluded children but has yet to focus on indigenous children more specifically, as it is confronted with the limited scope of data on indigenous children derived from population censuses, Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) and Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS). Through the implementation of its medium-term strategic plan, UNICEF is addressing the need to increase participation of indigenous peoples in programme design, implementation and monitoring. Key topics currently being addressed include: climate change; migration; violence against indigenous women and children; suicide; birth registration; intercultural bilingual education; and incorporating indigenous

peoples' cultural perspectives in health policies and programming and reproductive health services. In order to enhance programming for indigenous children, a project on guidance in respect of principles and programmes will be launched in 2012 and advocacy will continue, utilizing the report entitled *State of the World's Indigenous Peoples* in 2013 and the session of the Permanent Forum in May 2012. A recommendation was put forth by various participants at the Support Group meeting which entailed the need to increase the scope of data from Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys on indigenous children.

39. The participants also discussed the situation of adolescent girls, in particular their withdrawal from the social sphere when they reach puberty, resulting in their limited access to social services and opportunities. It was recognized that rural indigenous girls in Latin America drop out of school early, have limited mobility and autonomy, enter into early marriage, and experience an increase in the risk of social and gender violence, a heavy domestic/productive work burden, and higher adolescent fertility rates than urban adolescents. In this light, UNFPA presented a good-practice model developed by the Population Council and supported by UNFPA that is aimed at building the capacities of adolescent girls' social, health and economic assets through the creation of safe spaces in their communities, the strengthening of peer networks and the provision of alternative life paths. The Abriendo Oportunidades programme was recommended as a good practice for indigenous communities.

III. Reporting session of the 2011 annual meeting of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues

A. Reporting on country missions

40. The secretariat of the Permanent Forum provided information on the multi-agency mission to Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Paraguay that was conducted during April-May 2009. The aim of the mission was to verify reports of forced labour and servitude among the Guarani peoples. The recommendations arising from the mission called upon the United Nations country teams and respective Governments to promote the human rights of indigenous peoples and to implement the recommendations of the Permanent Forum regarding the situation of the Guarani peoples. In July 2010, the Permanent Forum conducted a mission to Colombia to observe human rights violations of the Awá indigenous peoples who are in danger of extinction owing to armed conflicts. After these missions, reports which included recommendations to the respective Governments were presented by the Permanent Forum.

41. A representative of UNFPA and the Chair of the Inter-agency Theme Group on Indigenous Issues and Cultural Diversity of the Plurinational State of Bolivia provided information on the work of the United Nations country team in contributing to the protection of the lives of the Guarani peoples. In this regard, there was support for a situational analysis of the Guarani peoples, and a strategic plan for the Alto Parapeti was formulated with local government authorities and representatives of the Guarani peoples. Also, a programme was initiated for providing the Guarani with identity documents, so as to enable them access to cash transfer programmes and other social services. The programme reached 700 persons, mainly women.

B. Reporting on the work on human rights and indigenous peoples

42. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights provided an update on its 2011-2012 workplan and informed participants on upcoming publications and reports, including: the annual report of the High Commissioner to the Human Rights Council on the rights of indigenous peoples (September 2012), a handbook on indigenous peoples for parliamentarians (produced together with the secretariat of the Permanent Forum and the Inter-Parliamentary Union), guidelines concerning indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation, the results of a survey on good practices related to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, a guidebook for national human rights institutions on the use of the Declaration, and a study for submission to the Human Rights Council regarding participation of indigenous peoples in the United Nations.

43. According to the Office of the High Commissioner, there will be a seminar in 2012 on treaties and other constructive arrangements between indigenous peoples and States. The Office of the High Commissioner also reported on its participation, as Chair, in the United Nations Indigenous Peoples' Partnership programmes and the reformed Indigenous Fellowship Programme. The July 2012 session of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples will focus, inter alia, on a study on indigenous languages and cultures and work on the reports on indigenous peoples' rights to participate in decision-making. The work of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations is also under the expanded mandate of the Office of the High Commissioner. Joint activities with field presence will include: workshops, provision of technical assistance and comments on laws being drafted, and the development of thematic guidance notes. The Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, whose mandate is supported by the Office of the High Commissioner, will make a number of country visits, including to Argentina and the United States of America; and will be focusing on the thematic issue of extractive industries.

C. Report of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on its corporate policy on indigenous and tribal peoples

44. In response to the recommendations of the Permanent Forum at its 2011 session, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) presented a report on the status of its corporate policy on indigenous and tribal peoples and the main activities of its Working Group on Indigenous Issues. The policy of FAO on indigenous and tribal peoples was approved in 2010 by the Director-General and his Cabinet and is being widely disseminated. The implementation of this policy is currently under way with the support of an interdepartmental working group. While FAO activities, projects and programmes have wide dissemination, there is no umbrella programme at FAO on indigenous peoples' issues. Instead, there are diverse activities undertaken in partnership with Governments and local actors that impact indigenous peoples' livelihoods.

45. In order to implement its policy, FAO will strengthen its voluntary and technical guidelines. In 2012-2013, it will carry out a capacity development demonstration programme for reducing deforestation and forest degradation and enhancing forest

carbon stocks through community forest management, focusing on indigenous communities. Within the framework of Millennium Development Goals-related projects, FAO will focus its work on addressing the issue of indigenous peoples and nutrition. In addition to describing these broader initiatives, FAO reported that technical support has been provided to a proposed project in Argentina for strengthening institutional and human capacities of indigenous peoples. FAO was accepted as a Forest Carbon Partnership Facility delivery partner in the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility Global Consultation with Indigenous Peoples, held in Panama in September 2011. In partnership with the Convention on Biological Diversity, FAO is carrying out a gap analysis and preparing a toolbox on traditional knowledge and customary use.

D. Reporting from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) on the Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility call for proposals

46. There has been a call for proposals by the Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility which represents an opportunity for applicants to engage in microprojects benefiting the development and capacity-building of indigenous peoples. Those with winning proposals are awarded small grants ranging from $20,000 to $50,000 for a maximum duration of two years. Proposals are reviewed by the Board of the Assistance Facility, comprising primarily indigenous leaders. Funding is for microprojects that are focused in any of the following priority areas: culture, identity and traditional knowledge; technology; agro-biodiversity; natural resource management and community-based forestry; market access, off-farm activities and enterprise development; human rights; intellectual property rights; gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment; ethno-tourism; participatory mapping of ancestral lands and territory; and adaptation to climate change. The technical review criteria focus on the project's relevance and feasibility, institutional capacity and credibility, the balance of the grant portfolio, and the development of culture and identity. Indigenous peoples' organizations support the management of the Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility at the regional level. A 2011 desk review of 53 projects revealed that 45,000 people had directly benefited; 1,200 communities had been served; 21,000 people had been trained; and 184 groups had been created for building and strengthening local institutions, with 8,400 individuals participating. The 2011 call for proposals saw an increase in proposals from Africa, and in proposals prepared in the English language. The Assistance Facility met in January 2012 to review proposals and make final decisions on awards.

E. Reporting from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on behalf of the GEF partnership of agencies, and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC)

47. The GEF Small Grants Programme implemented by UNDP provides small grants for up to $50,000 to non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations and indigenous peoples. Since 1992, 14,500 projects have been funded;

within the last eight years, their coverage has grown rapidly, from 65 to 123 countries. Most Small Grants Programme projects focus on biodiversity, followed by climate change and land degradation. At least 15 per cent of the Small Grants Programme portfolio directly supports indigenous peoples, and 17 per cent of projects are carried out through or with women. As outlined in the United Nations Development Group Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues (p. 31), the Small Grants Programme constitutes an effective programming and delivery mechanism operating through a voluntary national steering committee with a non-governmental majority that work, hand in hand, with an active and capable network of community-level grass-roots constituencies, and an efficient infrastructure for rolling out and funding community interventions.

48. In order to enhance knowledge-sharing and effective programming, a global registry of indigenous and community conserved areas (ICCA) has been created jointly by the GEF Small Grants Programme and the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre, with a view to providing an overview of global maps and links, including basic information and case studies on indigenous and community conserved areas in pilot countries; national-scale data; and mapping for the purpose of documenting conservation. An indigenous and community conserved area is defined by the ICCA Consortium[8] as a community that has a close relationship with an area and wields power in decisions, either by law or practice, and where voluntary management achieves conservation. Currently, the global ICCA Registry has 36 indigenous and community conserved areas registered in its database, with 16 interactive case studies and 6 interactive country maps.[9] Other recent activities include an ICCA capacity-building workshop held during the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Japan in 2010; and contributions to national-level workshops on indigenous and community conserved areas in, inter alia, Australia, Kenya, Nepal and the Philippines.

F. Reporting on the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD)

49. UNDP provided an overview of the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD) which has contributed to reducing 17 per cent of current annual greenhouse gas emissions and to stabilizing temperature within 2° C. The Programme plans to provide incentives to developing countries for slowing down the rates of deforestation and degradation so as to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and to promote financial transfers by industrialized countries to developing countries as compensation for the costs of preventing deforestation.

50. The Programme was established in 2008 by FAO, UNDP and UNEP in response to the Bali Action Plan,[10] adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[11] at its thirteenth session. It has both national and global components, with the national component providing

[8] See www.iccaforum.org.

[9] See www.iccaregistry.org.

[10] FCCC/CP/2007/6/Add.1, decision 1/CP.13.

[11] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

capacity-building to 35 partner countries, and the global component providing guidance, promoting regional and international dialogues, and carrying out analyses. The primary issues in regard to UN-REDD that have been raised by indigenous peoples include: access to information, a need for consideration of retroactive benefits, a need for non-market-based REDD+ mechanisms, uncertainty centring around mechanisms for indigenous peoples' inclusion, fear of further marginalization, cultural disconnect in respect of placing values on natural resources, and scepticism regarding its market mechanisms.

51. UN-REDD seeks to engage with indigenous peoples through their representation on the UN-REDD policy board, along with civil society representation, and through the development of the free, prior and informed consent guidelines framework. The objective of this framework is to create a normative, policy and operational framework within which UN-REDD national programmes can seek to apply the principle of free, prior and informed consent, when appropriate and as determined by the national implementing partner in consultation with relevant rights-holders. Three regional consultations with indigenous peoples and civil society have taken place, in Viet Nam, Panama and the United Republic of Tanzania and their recommendations have been reflected in the draft guidelines on free, prior and informed consent.

52. The guidelines provide information on the elements of free, prior and informed consent, such as the normative framework underpinning the United Nations obligations to support the right to free, prior and informed consent; UN-REDD programme policy on applying the principle of free, prior and informed consent; the parties that seek and provide consent; managing grievances; and providing an accountability framework. During the first half of 2012, the guidelines will undergo a review process and the finalized guidelines will be presented to the Policy Board. This will be followed by national workshops designed to build indigenous peoples' capacities to apply the guidelines.

IV. Summary of recommendations formulated during the meeting

A. Advice provided by the Chair of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

53. The Chair of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues advised United Nations agencies and other partners:

- To work more closely and become better advocates for supporting Governments and indigenous peoples at the country level in advancing indigenous peoples' rights
- To strengthen relations between Permanent Forum members and United Nations agencies during the eleventh session of the Forum by liaising with the Forum's focal points for each agency
- To identify a focal point in each agency (a unit or person), depending on the role that each agency can play. One of the roles of the Inter-Agency Support Group is to promote the compliance with recommendations, in accordance with article 42 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

- To better organize the participation of the United Nations agencies and that of the Permanent Forum members during the sessions of the Forum, using the opportunity offered by those sessions to provide training (including leadership training) during the sessions to participants, parliamentarians, women and youth
- To increase the effectiveness of inter-agency collaboration during the annual meetings of the Support Group, through group breakout sessions organized by main thematic areas
- To provide continuous support to the Africa and Asia regions, with a view to establishing regional inter-agency support groups in the next two years
- To strengthen knowledge management and sharing through the creation of a platform that will serve as a repository of information, analysis, tools and methodologies generated by the United Nations agencies and specialized indigenous and non-indigenous consultants, as well as provide more effective and timely technical assistance.

B. Recommendations

54. In reference to the matter of which are the indigenous peoples in Africa, some members suggested that the Inter-Agency Support Group should be guided by the work of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, and that the 2005 *Report of the African Commission Working Group of Experts on Indigenous Populations/Communities* on the human rights situation of indigenous peoples and communities in Africa[12] should be shared with the United Nations country teams in the countries concerned, in order to advocate for their work with indigenous peoples. The brochure/fact sheet developed by the secretariat of the Permanent Forum, entitled "Indigenous peoples, indigenous voices", is another valuable document, which United Nations agencies can use and refer to.

55. The report of the Inter-Agency Support Group should be transmitted by UNFPA, as Chair of the Support Group's 2011 meeting, through its Executive Director, to all heads of agencies.

56. The Inter-Agency Support Group should request the United Nations Development Group to enhance follow-up mechanisms and actions with respect to indigenous peoples' rights. In this regard, it was also proposed that the United Nations Development Group be requested to include an item on the United Nations Development Group Guidelines on Indigenous Peoples' Issues in the agenda of its upcoming Principals meeting, with the aim of strengthening United Nations operational work on indigenous peoples at the country level.

57. The Chair of the United Nations Development Group should also request the different teams of regional directors to enhance support and follow-up with United Nations country teams on indigenous peoples-related issues.

58. The undertaking of efforts to address the meeting of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and to brief its delegates on the

[12] Banjul, African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights; Copenhagen, International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 2005.

work of the Permanent Forum, on the occasion of the Forum's tenth anniversary, was recommended by some members of the Inter-Agency Support Group.

59. There is a need to strengthen mechanisms for dialogue at the country level between indigenous peoples' organizations and the United Nations country teams. United Nations agencies at the regional and country levels can provide greater support in facilitating the dialogue between indigenous peoples' organizations and Governments so as to ensure their compliance with the recommendations emanating from the sessions of the Permanent Forum.

60. **IFAD should continue to support the secretariat of the Permanent Forum on capacity-building at country level with respect to the implementation of the United Nations Development Group Guidelines and on determining how United Nations agencies can best interact with indigenous peoples at country level.**

61. **United Nations agencies are encouraged to continue to develop indicators** relevant to indigenous peoples, such as those under the human rights indicator framework that is being developed, with the aim of measuring success of relevant programmes and policies.

C. Recommendations from various members of the Inter-Agency Support Group on the follow-up to the Permanent Forum recommendations to United Nations agencies

62. Consultation and implementation should always be conducted with the participation of indigenous peoples, when United Nations agencies are developing and implementing programmes that impact those peoples' lives.

63. There should be enhanced dialogue between Permanent Forum members and United Nations agencies in respect of developing recommendations for action by agencies, to ensure, inter alia, that recommendations fall within the mandate of the relevant agency and are actionable.

64. There is a need for increased follow-up to recommendations made by the Permanent Forum to United Nations inter-agency mechanisms, such as the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues.

65. The United Nations country team of the Plurinational State of Bolivia should continue to promote the human rights of indigenous peoples, including the implementation of the plan of action for the Guarani peoples,[13] and report on follow-up actions.

66. The United Nations country team of Paraguay should report on its efforts to address the Permanent Forum's recommendations regarding the indigenous peoples in the Chaco region, including support for the formulation of a strategy for the sustainable development of this region and its peoples.

[13] The plan of action was developed specifically for the Guarani peoples who have been enslaved by ranchers in the country. The members of the Permanent Forum visited the Plurinational State of Bolivia in 2010 and worked in partnership with the United Nations country team in support of the Guarani peoples. For complete information on the Guarani peoples' situation in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, see summary and recommendations of the report of the mission of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to the Plurinational State of Bolivia (E/C.19/2010/6).

67. United Nations agencies, in particular UNFPA, UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Bank, should address the issue of maternal mortality of indigenous women in their work at global, regional and country levels and should report thereon through their annual reporting mechanism.

D. Recommendations made by various Support Group members on operational issues, to be implemented by the Support Group in 2012

68. A follow-up invitation for lapsed agencies and new agencies (UN-Women) to join the Support Group should be sent out by the Chair of the Support Group.

69. The creation of a more visible leadership role for the secretariat as a permanent Co-Chair of the Inter-Agency Support Group was suggested by one member.

70. It was suggested that a standard item be included in the agenda of the annual meetings of the Support Group entailing the request that United Nations agencies respond to Permanent Forum recommendations.

71. The practice of including a substantive standard agenda item focused on inter-agency collaboration for the coming year should be revived, starting with the agenda of the 2012 meeting of the Support Group.

72. The need to refocus the agenda of the annual meeting of the Support Group so as to render it more strategic and practical, with prior inputs from meeting participants, was emphasized.

73. The Support Group's annual meeting should be of three days' duration, should stress maximum attendance at the entire meeting and should be held in a collegial atmosphere.

74. It was suggested that the hosting agency of each annual Support Group meeting dedicate an estimated half-day for reporting on the work it was carrying out within a specific mandated area.

75. Meetings of the Inter-Agency Support Group during the eleventh session of the Permanent Forum should be strategically planned in consultation with Forum members, with a view to making the agenda more clearly defined and reducing the number of agenda items.